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July 9, 2003

Sam Giordano  
Executive director  
American Association for Respiratory Care  
11030 Ables Lane  
Dallas, TX 75229

Dear Sam:

On behalf of the 14,000 members of the American Thoracic Society, I want to express our full support for recognition of respiratory therapy services under the Medicare home health benefit. Medicare should recognize and reimburse respiratory therapists for the valuable services they provide to Medicare beneficiaries.

As you know, Medicare beneficiaries with respiratory diseases receive a wide range of services under the Medicare home health benefit. Many patients with COPD or asthma need the expert care provided by respiratory therapists. All patients on home ventilators require the services provided by respiratory therapists.

We share your concern that the Medicare does not allow for respiratory therapists to bill for services under the Medicare home health benefit. The Medicare payment policy effectively denies Medicare beneficiaries with respiratory conditions access to the high quality services the respiratory therapists provide.

The 14,000 members support your efforts to correct this aberration in Medicare payment policy.

Sincerely,

Homer A. Boushey, Jr. MD  
President  
American Thoracic Society